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The Catholic Worker

December, 1959

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The Catholic Worker

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39 Spring Street New York 12, N.Y.

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386 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 16

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Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Orange, Conn., under the act of March 3, 1879. Printed in the U.S.A. and published weekly, except biweekly during July and August, at 440 Post Road, Orange, Conn., by The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N.Y. MUrray Hill 3-9685.

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U. S. and Canada, $8 a year. Foreign, $10. Single copies 25¢
Printed at the Wilson H. Lee Co., Orange, Conn.

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

BIRTH CONTROL IN POLITICS

IT WOULD have been difficult, a few short weeks ago, to persuade anyone that the issue of birth control might shape the course of our national elections. It is true that the mass media—radios, T.V., newspapers and magazines—have increasingly directed attention to problems of an expanding population and birth control practices. Not, however, until the Catholic Bishops of the United States issued their statement did it blow up into the present campaign issue.

The Bishops' statement enunciated no new position for the Church; it offered only a restatement of the familiar Catholic teaching on the morality of artificial birth control. Why then was it immediately seized upon, why did it rouse a furor where none previously existed, why did it draw forth intemperate criticism even from usually sympathetic and thoughtful critics of the Catholic Church?

Some reasons may be found in that section of the Bishops' statement which drew the most attention. The statement said in part that Catholics "will not . . . support any public assistance, either at home or abroad, to provide artificial birth prevention, abortion or sterilization. . . ." Immediately the chase was on. What did the Presidential possibilities, and most particularly the foremost Catholic contender for the Presidency, think of the statement? If elected President, how would each man deal with the issue if it arose?

Senator John F. Kennedy gave a thoughtful and responsible answer, an answer that was soon distorted and attacked by people who evidently felt that they knew his mind better than he did himself. Most of the other candidates then responded —Messrs. Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon keeping their own counsel. The answers were remarkably similar, Stuart Symington alone saying that he would positively advocate the "government's furnishing of planned parenthood information abroad."

Over the restrained comments of the politicians, however, were heard louder cries of advice, criticism and expostulation. In most of the comments there were painfully evident an apparent inability to focus on the issue to be discussed and a lack of clarity in the discussion. One respected Protestant leader said that there was no moral or religious basis for the position of the Catholic Church. Another Protestant leader, after advocating government intervention in birth control programs, said the issue was not political but moral. Yet another, in discussing the possibility of a Presidential veto of a birth control bill, said that "as a member of the Protestant faith I think it should be left up to the individual conscience to make such a decision," that it "should not be determined for him [the President] by the Catholic Church."

THE CONFUSION and lack of charity were not confined to religious spokesmen. One New York paper, which considers itself liberal, liberally indulged in practices that it has frequently criticized in political figures. "The issue is not Catholicism. The issue is birth control," the paper commented editorially, and went on: "To say that it is improper for the government to indorse birth control programs abroad because some Americans oppose them is like saying we dare not condemn 'apartheid' in South Africa because some Americans favor segregation here." If this piece of ostensible reasoning means anything it means that Catholics, if they oppose government support of birth control programs abroad, are to be bracketed with segregationists as immoral and dangerous. And not only Catholics, but presumably such people as Harry Truman, President Eisenhower and

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Eleanor Roosevelt, all of whom rejected such programs for governmental action. The President, while damping much of the explosive force of the issue with his statement, did not, unfortunately, add much to an intellectual clarification. His dictum that the issue is religious not political belongs with the other obfuscating comments of those who differed with him.

The various dualisms that have been proposed—"moral not political," "individual conscience not public concern," "birth control not Catholicism"—are almost equally unsatisfactory. Religious and moral positions have political implications; the believing man is not separate from the citizen who makes political decisions. Although many people have difficulty in recognizing the fact when their deepest beliefs, or their strongest prejudices, are challenged, our form of government has provided for the practical settlement even of those issues which its citizens will continue to debate.

Every person has, we believe, the civic right to advance his own cause, to advocate and attempt to persuade others to his point of view. One may advocate pacifism, prohibition, polygamy or planned parenthood. If one is successful, if there is a reasonable consensus, the laws and even the conventions of the country will reflect this. If one is not successful, or if the laws once formed are deemed ineffectual or harmful to society, other laws and conventions will prevail. Pacifists will be respected but they will not determine our armaments; prohibition we have tried and found wanting; polygamy we have declared illegal. Planned parenthood by means of contraceptives we have largely left to the conscience of the individual citizen.

Now, however, the birth control issue has been injected into the political campaign. It would be regrettable if the birth control issue, important as it may be, obscured the other, more pressing matters on which the future President must act and the present contenders are expected to declare themselves. It would be regrettable, too, if the complex relation which obtains between personal belief and official acts were further obscured rather than clarified in the coming months. But it would be most regrettable, and most harmful, if the present flare-up allowed people to rest contentedly in the illusion that an American can be a good citizen only if he maintains a discreet silence on issues where his beliefs lead him to conclusions that run counter to majority opinion. We can stand strong disagreements more readily than the extension of such harmful conceptions of democracy.

THE "PRE-INVESTMENT" PHASE

THE EARLY HOPES of shifting more of the burden of technical aid from America to the newly prosperous European nations have been dampened. The gold reserves and foreign exchange are there all right, but somehow the funds for loans and grants are not available. France and Germany, for instance, have their own tight budgets, if for divergent reasons. To recognize an obligation is often a long way from coming up with the necessary means.

Meanwhile the United Nations seeks to lay the foundations for future technical assistance. The new program of the U.N. Special Fund calls for immediate expenditures of twenty-four million dollars for the preliminaries to a large-scale capital outlay aimed at raising living standards to a decent human minimum in the underdeveloped countries.

One phase of this "pre-investment" program is to make local surveys of potentialities in fisheries, water power, mineral and other resources. Another is to study national potentials for increasing industrial and other production. A third is to set up centers providing vocational training.

About half the survey and educational projects proposed by Paul Hoffman at the current U. N. session are for Latin America; the others are for Africa, Asia, the Far East and the Middle East. One of the largest would survey the four lower tributaries of the Mekong River, which flows through Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and South Vietnam, for irrigation, flood control and hydro-electric power. The four respective governments would allocate funds of their own to set up agricultural stations to explore the possibilities of irrigation.

In the past decade per capita income in the underdeveloped lands has increased on the average of fifteen per cent. To take the great strides forward necessary in the next decade, outside capital on a much larger scale than hitherto will be required. And the Hoffman formula of acquiring technical data and building up trained personnel now, in order to utilize well the big outlays that must come later, has logic, experience and humanity to commend it.

DRUG INDUSTRY UNDER FIRE

SENATOR Estes Kefauver has made a specialty of asking embarrassing questions—about organized crime, about the Eisenhower Administration's discredited Dixon-Yates contract, about

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"administered" prices in steel and other industries. Now his Senate Antitrust and Monopoly subcommittee is preparing to turn its attention to the United States' multi-billion dollar prescription drug industry.

Charges of price-fixing and criminal conspiracy against the nation's top manufacturers of anti-polio vaccine, it will be remembered, were recently dismissed by Circuit Court Judge Philip Forman, who ruled that the government had failed to substantiate its accusations. Conceding that the government's attorneys had raised the conjecture that the drug companies had conspired together, Judge Forman held that the evidence established "no bridge over the gap from fact to inference."

But this favorable decision gives the drug manufacturers no more than a brief breather. After more than a year's spadework, and spurred on by mountains of mail from interested citizens, the Kefauver subcommittee promises a sweeping investigation of every phase of the drug industry. The Senators plan to investigate charges that drug prices are unreasonably high, that price-fixing eliminates competition, that druggists who cut prices are harassed by the manufacturers, that financial institutions exert control over the industry through stock holdings in competing drug firms.

Even before the hearings began, subcommittee member Senator George A. Smathers (D.-Fla.) released some striking facts compiled by staff investigators, and drug manufacturers responded immediately with statements of their own. Among the facts the Senators want explained is the extraordinary discrepancy between prices charged by the drug companies in this country and prices they charge abroad. "For example," Senator Smathers pointed out, "the cost to the consumer of a bottle of one hundred tablets of vitamin B-12 is $2.63 in Venezuela. In this country, the same medicine produced by the same manufacturer runs $4.88. . . . In Argentina, the cost of fifty tablets of the tranquilizer known as Miltown is forty-six cents. In the United States people who need this drug must pay from $3.85 to $4.25, even though it is made by the same American firm that supplies the drug to Argentina."

The drug companies, not surprisingly, deny any and all wrong-doing. They base their arguments for high drug prices chiefly on the high cost of the industry's enormous research programs. Dr. Austin Smith, head of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, also emphasizes the amazing medical advances produced by these programs. Dr. Smith cites the extraordinary decline in the death rate from all infectious diseases and asks, "How much value can we place on 3.2 million American lives?" These lives, he maintains, were saved largely by reason of the chemical revolution in medicine.

The hearings may well become explosive, both because of the high stakes involved for the industry and the emotional impact of the situation, involving as it does the young, the old, the sick. Senator Kefauver has underlined this aspect of the hearings by citing some of the pathetic letters written by thousands of aged and chronically ill persons, all revealing the crushing financial burden of prolonged or serious illness. It may even be that these investigations will force a long-due reappraisal of the nation's entire health program, with special attention to the needs of the aged, the infirm and those on small, fixed incomes.

THE PRESIDENT ON STEEL

BEFORE LEAVING on his eleven-nation trip, President Eisenhower tried once more to do something about the impasse in steel. His words were firm enough: labor and management "will act responsibly, or else. . . ." Yet in this latest of a long series of Presidential appeals to both sides it was posssible to read a note of wistfulness into Mr. Eisenhower's remarks. It would be "good news," he said hopefully, if he learned the steel strike was settled while he was abroad. As far as a President can be, Mr. Eisenhower is in something of a spot on this thing, and he'd like very much to get off it.

The Steelworkers were apparently all prepared for the President's speech. As soon as it was delivered, they urged that the Presidential fact-finding board be empowered to make recommendations and pledged that the union would negotiate a settlement "within the framework of the board's recommendation." But the steel companies were not having any of that. The industry's spokesman promptly turned down any steps towards a government-proposed solution, branding the move as one more attempt by union leaders to avoid their responsibilities.

So the matter stands at this writing. Negotiations are continuing, and there is some small chance that the President will receive his "good news" while abroad. If that news does not come, Mr. Eisenhower's speech indicates that he has now decided to take positive steps to prevent what he called "the crippling of an entire economy" because of a labor-management dispute in a basic indus-

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try. Thus far, however, the public has no clue as to how he intends to accomplish his purpose.

Interestingly enough, a recent Gallup Poll on the subject indicated that a very large majority of American citizens would favor compulsory arbitration in a situation like the steel strike, with the findings of a special court to be binding on both sides. Whatever the President thinks of this solution, however, the Senate is likely to have a livelier realization of the dangers involved, and legislation to provide for compulsory arbitration on a wide scale is unlikely.

For our part, if Congress does try to deal with the question, we favor giving the President not one but a variety of courses from which he can choose depending on the situation. As we have noted in the past, one basic flaw in the present law consists precisely in the fact that it does not give the President sufficient flexibility of action—a fact which the steel strike amply illustrates. If new legislation is to be passed, it would be foolish simply to substitute one straitjacket for another.

AGITATION IN PANAMA

THE DUBIOUS WAY in which the United States obtained control over the Canal Zone has to be borne in mind when evaluating Panamanian unrest. If the recent riots on the isthmus can be taken as symptomatic of a new resurgence of hostile sentiments in the Caribbean, they also reflect pressures now being exerted against the Panamanian government in this pre-election year.

When such a government finds itself in serious economic difficulties, what is more natural than to turn to the heavily patronized Canal for larger revenues? As it is now Panama gets one-half the net revenue, while the United States uses the other half for improvement purposes. National pride, as well as economics, is involved in the fact that Panamanians get lower wages and poorer jobs than workers sent from the United States (and their opportunities for training in skills are very limited).

In the original, hastily-signed treaty of 1903 the United States was empowered to act as "if it were sovereign" in the region. The generally friendly la Guardia government needs concessions of a political nature, too, to confute the agitation of the extreme nationalists. Would it be sufficient if in the Canal Zone the two-star Panamanian flag were to be raised beside the Stars and Stripes on holidays? Would it be going too far if the same national emblem were to fly from one of the masts of all vessels passing through the Canal? With a will on both sides it would seem possible to agree on acceptable ways and means of manifesting Panama's ultimate sovereignty. And enough leeway would likewise seem to exist for economic and other desired modifications, provided the Canal matter receives immediate and full-scale attention in Washington.

NO BUSINESS AS USUAL

THE BUSINESS community is normally thought of as "conservative," but in the United States the term usually means only that its spokesmen are quick to say "No" to almost any proposal that involves government expenditures. For this reason we were particularly struck by some recent remarks to the National Association of Manufacturers by Thomas J. Watson, Jr., president of International Business Machines Corp.

It would be disastrous, Mr. Watson said, to ignore the fact that Communism has been successful in raising the standard of living in Russia materially. The "all-important" problem of our time, then, is that the Soviet Union's record on this score is tremendously impressive to underdeveloped nations. At the same time, the American system is so enormously successful that the uncommitted nations are eager to follow the pattern set by the United States. Mr. Watson's plea was that the United States "make it possible, even easy, for them to do it. . . . We won't do it with fizzling rockets or lowered taxes or something for everyone."

In view of this situation, Mr. Watson told his N.A.M. audience, businessmen should stop complaining about high taxes. "We can't do all the things necessary for the United States to do—in this country and abroad—and still proceed on the 'business as usual' basis." Americans want a stronger nation, a balanced budget, and the same or even lower taxes. "These three goals," Mr. Watson pointed out, "are incompatible. One of our first sacrifices must be a willingness to accept higher taxes if necessary. . . . There are no easy solutions."

Mr. Watson has, we think, faced our national situation honestly, and his remarks make eminently good sense. The N.A.M. is traditionally a hard-shelled group, and it is perhaps not surprising that press reports noted that Mr. Watson's speech was greeted only with "polite but restrained applause." We do hope, however, that outside of the limited N.A.M. circle his point will receive the sober consideration it deserves.

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Catholics and Population

The bitterly divisive question of birth control has now been injected into the already beleaguered foreign aid program

by JAMES O'GARA

WRITING ABOUT the birth control-foreign aid controversy, James Reston of the N. Y. *Times* said: "The current argument over public policy and birth control has made at least one thing clear. This is that the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States is not acting in a way to promote the candidacy of Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts or any other Roman Catholic. . . ."

Mr. Reston has discovered one bright spot in a generally unhappy picture. It would, I suppose, represent progress if people came to realize that the American Bishops are not interested in promoting the candidacy of a Catholic for President. But that is about the only benefit likely to come out of the affair.

On the level of domestic politics, Senator Kennedy has almost certainly been hurt badly, in spite of his thoughtful statement on the issue. This in turn will inevitably lead to suspicion about the motives of those who pressed the birth control issue in political terms, even among Catholics who have not been Kennedy supporters. And it is hard to see how the injection of an emotion-packed religious issue into the Presidential campaign can do anything but weaken still further our unity and sense of national purpose.

As for foreign aid itself, a spokesman for the International Cooperation Administration has said that no foreign aid funds have been spent for the dissemination of birth control information and that there are no plans for such action. Nonetheless, it would be futile to hope that this will end the matter. A bitterly divisive question has been introduced in connection with the already beleaguered foreign aid program, and this fact is bound to color all future discussions of the subject.

As far as the relationship between religious groups in this country is concerned, and particularly Catholic-Protestant relations, the controversy will probably have a bad effect. This is so not because a difference has been revealed but because of the nature and tone of the various exchanges. On this point it would be pleasant to be proved a bad prophet, but I doubt that the bitterness growing out of this controversy will die easily.

IN THEIR STATEMENT, released the day before Thanksgiving, the Catholic Bishops said: ". . . there is abundant evidence of a systematic, concerted effort to convince United States public opinion, legislators and policy makers that United States national agencies, as well as international bodies, should provide with public funds and support, assistance in promoting artificial birth prevention for economically underprivileged countries."

I do not know what evidence the Bishops had in mind, but no reader of the New York newspapers could miss the fact that over the last two or three months material on the population problem has been appearing with increasing frequency, much of it pro-birth control. In a recent speech delivered in Rome, Arnold Toynbee urged a total effort for population control under U.N. auspices. The Draper Committee on foreign aid recommended to President Eisenhower that this country help underdeveloped nations to set up birth control clinics. The Protestant World Council of Churches affirmed its support of birth control measures on a mass scale. C.B.S. television presented a widely publicized special program on population, Episcopal Bishop James Pike issued public statements on behalf of Planned Parenthood, and a not untypical *Life* article illustrated the possible future with row upon row of men in totem pole-style, occupying every available inch of space and being forced to stand on top of each other in order to survive.

It was with such material in mind, apparently, that the Catholic Bishops felt impelled to issue their statement. In it they reaffirmed the standard Catholic posi-

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tion. Birth control by artificial means, the Bishops said, involves a frustration of the conjugal act which is morally inadmissible, and they denied that contraception is gradually becoming acceptable even in the Catholic Church.

As for national or international campaigns to promote artificial contraception, the Bishops said: "United States Catholics believe that the promotion of artificial birth prevention is a morally, humanly, psychologically and politically disastrous approach to the population problem. . . . They will not . . . support any public assistance, either at home or abroad, to promote artificial birth prevention, abortion or sterilization whether through direct aid or by means of international organizations." Thus, aside from the question of how one would interpret the phrase "will not support," the position of the Bishops was made quite clear.

IN THE COURSE of their statement, the Bishops referred rather bitterly to what they called "the recently coined terror technique phrase, 'population explosion,' " a term they consider extremely misleading. For their part, non-Catholics before and since have criticized Catholics very severely in the opposite direction, charging that they consistently ignore or minimize the problem of population pressure.

The fact is, I think, that advocates on both sides sometimes load their arguments a little, and this is probably inevitable. The population problem is extremely complicated—much more so than most people apparently realize—and it is difficult for any abbreviated or popular discussion of it to be completely balanced and accurate. On such a touchy subject this is bound to lead to charges and countercharges of distortion.

Opposing artificial birth control on moral grounds, Catholics favor "increasing the food rather than decreasing the people." They stress positive economic, social and political measures: the development of natural resources, the necessity of international social justice, the creation of a true community of nations, the promotion of education, the introduction of modern industrial methods, and the like. Few people who are concerned with the problem would object to these, but it is true that Catholics sometimes make these difficult tasks sound impossibly easy. On the popular level this is often the case because, ironically enough, Catholic writers are prone to an excessive faith in the ability of science to break through the resources barrier. The idea of farming the oceans for edible algae and plankton, for instance, may strike some Americans as a novel project, but it is old stuff to the regular reader of Catholic magazines—where, unfortunately, it is often presented without an adequate understanding of the difficulties involved.

As far as I can see, most non-Catholics who concern themselves with population problems believe in artificial birth control. As a result, they tend to place their emphasis in quite a different direction. Although favoring many of the measures Catholics stress, they give a prominent place to quick checks on the birth rate, and what oversimplification there is on their side usually revolves around this point. Faith in the efficacy of the birth control clinic often seems almost total, despite all the anthropologists have to tell us about the complexities of cultural change. Indeed, it sometimes seems that the more difficulties birth control programs encounter in practice, the more convinced the crusading birth-controller becomes that salvation lies just ahead in the shape of more doctors, more clinics, more pills.

These are extremes—caricatures, if you will, although like all caricatures they have some truth in them. But if it is a fact that each side suffers more or less regularly from certain excesses of expression, this does not seem to be the most important point. Whether one says the glass is half-full or half-empty, the population problem does exist, and it poses terrible questions which we must face.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC revolution stems essentially not from any change in the birth rate but from a sharp decline in the death rate, a drop associated with the Industrial Revolution and the rise of modern scientific medicine. In the countries of Western Europe and in the United States where the fall in the death rate has already taken place, this development was followed by a gradual decline in the birth rates until the two came into more or less of a rough balance. Before this happened, however, the population doubled and then more than doubled again.

Much the same process is now taking place elsewhere. There are, however, significant differences. The decline in the death rate is coming abruptly, rather than in stages as it did in the West. Thus the gap between births and deaths is already very large, and it will probably remain so for some presently indefinite period. Furthermore, this process is taking place in countries which are largely pre-Industrial Revolution in economy and almost pre-feudal in social structure.

In countries like the U.S., the normal annual expansion in productive capacity takes care of the usual population increase. This automatic expansion is lacking in the non-industrialized countries, and in some of them, as a result, aid from the West has so far accomplished only two things: a sharp reduction in the death rate through use of mass inoculations, D.D.T., etc., and just enough expansion in productive capacity to keep them abreast of the subsequent expansion in population. In such cases, these nations find

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that they must run furiously just to keep from falling behind.

Coping with the situation is very difficult—something that must be granted, I think, by those who believe in quick population checks as well as for those who concentrate on economic expansion. It may be my own bias in operation, but it seems to me a fact that illiterate or semi-literate village cultures reject intrusion into their familial patterns even more vigorously than they resist industrial and agricultural innovation. No one, surely, would say that either the introduction of modern technology or of birth control practices is easy.

Much of the current controversy in the United States might be considered academic. India, for example, already has an extensive population control program, and it plans to expand it very drastically, without U.S. money. For my part, aside from the question of where the funds come from, I have serious doubts that the birth rate in the underdeveloped countries is in fact susceptible to a large degree of control in the near future, barring a major discovery such as a contraceptive administered by mass inoculation. And even then, I am not at all sure that such devices could be effective very quickly, unless the governments concerned took measures more totalitarian in character than most Americans would like to see.

(It is perhaps pertinent to consider in this connection an objection raised about the Bishops' statement by the Unitarians. The simultaneous reference in the document to birth control, abortion and sterilization was, they said, unfair, and in the context in which the discussion is carried on in the U.S., one can see their point. Without going into the theological reasoning that links the three items, however, it should be noted that in population programs birth control, abortion and sterilization are in fact sometimes combined. In India, for example, social workers are said to receive a commission for each person they persuade to be sterilized, and in Japan, so often singled out for praise by population experts, it is reported that there are over one million legal abortions every year as part of the birth control program.)

In any case, there is no denying that the population problem is a grave one. Considered as a whole, the world's population is growing at the rate of 1.7 per cent annually. In many underdeveloped countries, however, the growth rate is from 3 to 3.5 per cent annually, and at present rates of growth the population of the world will roughly double in forty years.

The key words here which offer some hope are, of course, "at present rates of growth." For if the introduction of modern science into these countries means a sharp decline in the death rate, the experience of already industrialized countries suggests that the birth rate will also decline, quite surely even though more slowly. Even if this is the case, however, there is no doubt at all that the next three or four decades are crucial ones.

As the recently released State Department report on the subject put it, "it can be theoretically demonstrated that given sufficient development and utilization of the world's resources, the earth can adequately support a much larger population than any that can be expected by the year 2000." The problem is, however, how the underdeveloped countries are "to make the jump to this state of adequacy from the present situation in which most of their people are living at bare subsistence levels."

Birth control or no, if the challenge of population in the underdeveloped countries is to be met, the Western industrialized nations will have to do far more than they have yet done to expand the productive base in these countries. In their statement the Bishops said that although Catholics cannot and will not give their approval to attempts "to promote artificial birth prevention, abortion or sterilization," they are prepared to dedicate themselves to other efforts to cope with the population problem. Such dedication is essential, and from Catholic and non-Catholic alike.

AS FAR as Protestant-Catholic relations are concerned, the subject of artificial birth control is always one that exacerbates feelings on both sides, and this time is no exception. Perhaps this result is inevitable on such a sensitive subject, but I do not see why this should be taken for granted. Real communication between Protestants and Catholics on this point, as on so many, has been negligible, and often what there has been could have been better omitted.

All too frequently Catholics run rough-shod over Protestant sensibilities in this matter, by failure to consider the reasoning behind the Protestant position and particularly by their jibes at the fact that Protestant opinion on birth control has changed in recent decades. Many Catholic commentators take the tradition of Natural Law so much for granted that they fail completely to make clear what is meant by it. Then too, Catholic writers in practice tend to overburden the Natural Law, ignoring the fact that the further one goes from the basic tenet to do good and avoid evil, the more tenuous one's judgments must be. The language of Catholics on the birth control issue often seems unduly harsh. If many people outside the Church do not understand the reasoning involved in the Catholic position on this matter, the blame is not entirely on their shoulders.

All this is true. Again, though, it is not the whole story. Granting that popular Catholic descriptions of the Natural Law often leave much to be desired, it is still shocking when otherwise learned non-Catholic thinkers betray only the most primitive understanding

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of what Catholics mean by it. Discussion beyond the mass-magazine level is admittedly not easy to find, but some effort in this direction should not be too much to ask. And if Protestants fear the Catholic concept of the Natural Law is too "rigid" and "rationalist," they should understand the comparable Catholic disquiet over shifting "situation ethics" and all that this might lead to.

If Catholics sometimes argue their case badly—as I think they do—there are pitfalls that Protestants too must avoid. No matter how vigorously they disagree with the Catholic position, there are good and bad ways of registering dissent. In the present controversy it seems to me that initial Protestant comment was not very helpful. Here the preeminent example is probably Episcopal Bishop James Pike, who described the Catholic position as one which would condemn millions of people "to starvation, bondage, misery and despair."

Like Catholics, Protestants believe that religion must sometimes say "No" to Caesar. Like Catholics, they affirm that the world of practical affairs must be subject to morality, even though this sometimes means going against prevailing trends and taking positions that are distinctly unpopular.

To cite particular examples from our own history, Protestant morality gave the U.S. Prohibition and what are called the Blue Laws. Right now the moral opposition of Protestants is generally credited with keeping off-track betting from being legalized in New York and many other places. This is the case, even though advocates of legalized gambling argue that taxes on betting would reduce slums, disease, and juvenile delinquency and produce better schools, healthier children and expanded social services. Protestants should realize that if Bishop Pike's sharp remarks about the Catholic position in the birth control controversy were turned around, Protestant moralists would in this case be damned for supporting a position which is condemning hundreds of thousands to "misery and despair," to use Bishop Pike's words.

It is not my intention, of course, to suggest that anyone should engage in such pointless tit-for-tat, and the gravity of the one problem cannot be compared with that of the other. But the illustration may serve to point up the fact that such comment on a serious theological question is dangerous and improper, whether for Catholics or Protestants.

CATHOLIC teaching on birth control is a hard saying, even for Catholics. Accepting neither the tradition of Natural Law nor the teaching authority of the Roman Catholic Church, most Protestants will not agree with it. But whatever our differences on this and other points, it is necessary that we be united in protecting the right and reaffirming the duty of religion to judge the world of politics and public affairs in the name of a higher law.

A matter of central concern in these discussions is the role religion will play in tomorrow's world. Catholics fear that we may be heading toward a future which rejects objective norms of morality and in which the Judaeo-Christian values of the West have gradually withered away. They fear a world in which religion is tolerated in the pulpit and moral values are ignored in practical decisions. They fear the rise of the "scientific," omnipotent State. And these fears are not without some foundation.

Speaking in Chicago shortly after the Catholic Bishops issued their statement, scientist Sir Julian Huxley unwittingly illustrated the point when he called for a new religion, rooted in science. "Man's destiny," he said, "is to be the sole agent for the future evolution of this planet." Like the doctrine of the four elements, earth, air, fire and water, present religions "are destined to disappear in competition with other, truer and more embracing thought—organizations which are handling the same range of raw or processed experience." And what of God? "The earth was not created; it evolved. So did all the animals and planets that inhabit it, including our human selves, mind and soul as well as brain and body."

Here, then, is the type of thinking which is most incomprehensible to the Catholic and most likely to rouse his deepest fears: the simple "scientific" act of non-faith, casually stated, taking so easily the giant step from non-being to being, from darkness to light, from void to shape, from nothingness to something. Just, "it was not created; it evolved." The possibility that men with these views may shape the future should frighten any believer, Catholic or not. It is in this context, perhaps, that the Bishops' statement on birth control might most profitably be read.

MID WINTER

Of singing nothing now
The almost leafless bough
Drops a dead letter.
The crows for worse or better
In tattered gown and raucous
Convene against the weather.
So heart and mind convicted
By circumstance are judged
Finally birds of a feather,
Sentenced to songless prison
Until another spring
Wings the horizon round,
Another Easter
Rises from its mound.

EDA LOU WALTON.

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An economic malady and a social disease, which spreads if left unattended

Unemployment Today

by PETER KILBY

WHAT IS THE significance of the term "unemployment" in the year 1959? Have three decades drained it of its terrible import of want and despair? Have twenty years of prosperity reduced unemployment to a simple statistic? To many the answer would doubtless seem "yes." Nonetheless, unemployment remains an ever-present part of the American enterprise system, and for many of those individuals who are without jobs its meaning has changed little since 1930.

In January of this year more than five and a half million Americans received handouts of surplus commodities consisting of flour, butter, rice, cornmeal and powdered milk. They stood in line for this food just as others stood in line thirty years before them.

Unemployment is an economic malady as well as a social disease, and if left unattended it spreads. However, not all unemployment is of the same nature or duration; at least three major types can be distinguished. The first is seasonal, the second is cyclical and the third is geographic.

Almost every sector of the economy experiences seasonal variation in the level of employment. There is a July trough and a December peak in the wholesale and retail trades; for services and contract construction the pattern is reversed. In manufacturing industries a let-down comes in the summer months. Taken together, these changes in the demand for labor might seem to offset one another. But labor mobility is far from perfect, and many workers are unable to move from industry to industry with shifts of demand. Certain geographic areas lacking sufficient diversification suffer more than others from these short-term fluctuations. Resort communities, Atlantic City for example, are particularly hard hit; tobacco-processing centers like Durham, North Carolina, also witness substantial unemployment in the off-season. Temporary changes in consumer demand for individual products can have a similar effect on particular communities—the demand for cars and unemployment in Detroit is a case in point. This type of short-term or seasonal unemployment is not persistent nor permanently damaging.

Mr. Kilby, a frequent contributor, specializes in the relationship between economic and political questions.

Of a considerably more serious nature is the large-scale and longer lasting unemployment brought about by changes in business conditions. Since World War II there have been three economic downturns which, in the Department of Labor's terminology, have resulted in periods of "substantial labor surplus." In the 1949-50 recession unemployment ranged from 3.1 to 4 million or from 5 to 7 per cent of the civilian labor force. The average unemployment figure for 1954 was 3.6 million, accounting for 5.6 per cent of the work force. Last year, in the nadir of the recession, 5.4 million workers were without jobs and average unemployment for the year was 6.8 per cent. By way of comparison, in 1933, at the depth of the depression, one-quarter of the work force was jobless.

WHAT ARE the causes of these recessions and why are they less severe than the depression of 1929-37? A downturn in the economy is most likely to be triggered by a contraction in one of the following areas: outlays for plant, equipment or inventory, consumer spending on durable goods, construction, and government expenditures. Unless strong demand conditions exist, a substantial cutback in any one of these sectors is likely to have unfavorable repercussions on expectations and hence the crucial decision to invest. Happily, most economists agree that another major depression is improbable because of such built-in stabilizers as the progressive income tax, unemployment compensation and the farm program. All these devices tend to sustain personal income, and thus demand, in the face of declining economic activity. Most important, the Federal Government through monetary and fiscal policy can pump purchasing power back into the economy and reverse the trend.

Yet an effective cure for the milder recession has not been found. When unemployment is of a less critical nature, 5 per cent rather than 10 per cent of the labor force, one is hesitant about implementing fiscal remedies. The reason for caution is apparent: inflation. Even in periods of moderate unemployment, given the sticky price structure of our economy, lower tax revenues and expanded public expenditures are likely to augment the process of creeping inflation.

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Nevertheless, proposals for resolving the recession problem have not been lacking. In April of this year, during its Unemployment Conference, the A.F.L.-C.I.O. came forward with a series of far-reaching recommendations for promoting full employment and national economic health. Under this program unemployment compensation would be enlarged and extended to cover more workers. The federal government would increase grant-in-aid and loaning activities for education, housing, distressed areas, urban renewal, airports and roads. To pay for these urgent social needs without inflation, the A.F.L.-C.I.O. proposes a reform of the tax structure—closing loopholes, correcting the abuses involved in the depletion allowances and expense accounts and raising taxes on capital gains and corporate profits. To strengthen the national purchasing the minimum hourly wage-rate would be increased from $1 to $1.25, and 7.5 million more workers could be brought under the protection of this legislation. Finally, a thirty-five hour week was proposed as the natural corollary of automation.

ALTHOUGH the resultant balance between private and public goods is certainly a desirable goal, there are nonetheless many practical difficulties with these recommendations. During periods of rising output and general prosperity the public mood is far from receptive to large-scale government spending of this type. The impact of such broad undertakings on wage-costs would almost certainly be inflationary.

Nor is the evidence concerning automation clear in its implications. Although fractional unemployment in the fifties has been greater than during the forties, 3.5-to-4 per cent as compared with 2.5 per cent, present employment levels are nevertheless considerably higher percentage-wise than the long-run national average. Finally, the heart of any such scheme would necessarily be a sizable increase in taxes. To state a fact baldly, from a political point of view a substantial hike in taxes for reasons other than national defense is simply not within the realm of the possible.

Our system is such that one hundred per cent employment can not be achieved without engendering an intolerable degree of inflation. As with many things in this life, we are forced to pursue conflicting objectives and arrive at an imperfect but workable balance. If we can not banish cyclical unemployment, what can we do to relieve the pain?

We can certainly afford larger amounts (by fifty per cent) of unemployment compensation for more people. Local unemployment funds have been accumulated far in excess of the payments at the present rate of compensation. As the wealthiest and most productive society in history we can also afford the luxury of ameliorating the most glaring inequities in our wage system, namely extending the minimum wage to fifteen million workers in the farm and service industries. Social justice demands and our means permit the enactment of these measures.

A final type of unemployment, perhaps fifteen per cent of the total, is that which is associated with depressed areas. This particular type of joblessness is the most persistent and results in the greatest harm to those individuals and communities affected. It is also a phenomenon about which something can and ought to be done.

The common feature of all regions having unemployment which is excessive (ten to fifteen per cent) and persistent (two years or more), is lack of industrial diversification. When a community is dependent on one industry and that industry experiences a drop in demand for its product, fundamental technological change or depletion of resources, the result is a depressed area. The coal-producing regions are a good example. Mechanization of the mines and a greatly reduced demand for coal has drastically curtailed the number of workers employed by the industry.

The most severely distressed regions can be found in West Virginia, Kentucky and Southern Illinois—all dependent on coal. Parts of Massachusetts and Rhode Island have been blighted because of textiles. Pennsylvania has developed pockets of chronic unemployment as a result of coal problems and a declining demand for non-electrical machinery and railroad equipment. Depletion of copper and lumber resources in sections of Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota has left depression for numerous communities.

A CLOSELY related problem is that of depressed rural regions, characterized by unemployment or disguised unemployment. Certain areas, totaling three hundred thirty-six counties, have been designated as "low-income rural areas" on the basis of two surveys, the first listing the five hundred counties ranking lowest in standard of living for farm families and the second listing the five hundred counties with the largest proportion of commercial farms having gross sales less than $2,500. The three hundred thirty-six counties were common to both lists. In Mississippi these low-income sections accounted for two-thirds of the population, almost one-half in Alabama and between a quarter and a fifth in Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennesee and West Virginia. The major causes for these islands of rural poverty include population pressure, exhaustion of the soil, insufficient farm size, technological advances, lack of alternate employment opportunities and inadequate educational facilities.

One might ask why the unemployed of these depressed urban and rural regions have not migrated to more prosperous areas. But these people have lived in one community all their lives; their friends, their relatives, all their roots are there. They are often over-

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aged and underskilled. Job opportunities elsewhere are limited and their knowledge of outside possibilities is very imperfect. Moving requires money and the typical family man is already in debt. Rather than attempt to dismantle the community, it makes more sense from both a human and in the long run an economic point of view to encourage expanding industries, new and old, to locate in these areas.

The steps that have been taken to relieve chronic local unemployment have been woefully inadequate. Limited technical assistance, preference in placing defense contracts, protection from foreign competition and a more rapid tax amortization for new plants are gestures which appease rather than solve. For low-income rural areas the Department of Agriculture has instituted a very modest development program to foster cooperation between the various government agencies, private organizations and local leaders. The combined effect of all these measures has been insignificant.

A few rough calculations indicate the nature and size of the required remedy. Sar Levitan, Labor economist for the Legislative Reference Service, estimated in 1957 that the creation of 120,000 jobs in depressed areas would reduce their unemployment rate to six per cent. Figuring that every hundred jobs in manufacturing industries generates another seventy-five jobs in related supplying industries, services and retail, 68,000 jobs would have to be created. Assuming a national average investment of fifteen thousand dollars per employee, the needed investment is about one billion dollars. Of this, six hundred million would be allocated for land, plant and equipment. Fifty per cent government-loan participation is considered a sufficient inducement to expanding industries to locate in these areas; thus a loan fund of three hundred million dollars would be required to provide the necessary capital supply.

The problems of depressed areas are simply too far-reaching to be resolved by local initiative. Clearly regional depression is best tackled in time of national prosperity. Its eradication will not only lead to a healthier economy but to greater national security through a wider dispersal of industry. And the inflationary potential of a federal program is slight, both because the amount of money required is modest—five hundred million would do the trick—and because loans would be directly tied to an increase in output. We can only hope that the Administration will come to its senses and realize that healthy communities have priority over wider roads and blind budgetary frugality.

In the three decades since 1929 we have managed, it appears, to exorcise the worst from the business cycle. And if we have not cured the ailment of periodic unemployment completely we can easily afford to palliate its effects. On the other hand, unemployment in depressed areas is one category of joblessness we need not countenance—it is inefficient, unjust and can be done away with cheaply. Much progress has been made in the last thirty years towards the elimination of unemployment as a social and economic disease; yet much remains to be made.

CRISIS IN IRISH LETTERS

Literary Life in Dublin

by STEPHEN P. RYAN

AFTER AN absence of three years, this writer found Dublin, on the surface at least, little changed; crowds still saunter down Grafton Street, with time out at Bewley's for coffee or for a "half-one" in Neary's pub. The shawl-draped women still scream out the merits of their fruits, vegetables and fish in Moore Street; the queues awaiting admission to the picture palaces on O'Connell Street are as long and patient as ever. There is one major change, however: a forest of T.V. aerials has newly sprung up, destroying much of the charm of the Dublin skyline.

Mr. Ryan is a member of the English faculty at Xavier University, New Orleans. This is his first appearance in The Commonweal.

But if the physical face of Dublin has been relatively unchanged, the same cannot be said of its literary life. For one thing, three major figures have died within the past year and a half: Seumas O'Sullivan (James Starkay), the editor of the *Dublin Magazine,* founded by A.E.; Lennox Robinson, playwright, producer and director of the Abbey Theatre; and, more recently, T. C. Murray, playwright, author of *Maurice Harte* and *Autumn Fire.* With them passed three of the few remaining links with the early days of the Irish revival; but, by way of compensation, perhaps, another Dubliner has recently returned to take up permanent residence: Padraic Colum, poet, playwright and critic,

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whose book on James Joyce (written in collaboration with his late wife, Mary Colum) was published last year.

Dublin, of course, means theater, and to most people Dublin theater means the Abbey. Currently performing in the cavernous Queen's Theatre in Pearse Street, since the destruction of the original theatre by fire some few years ago, the Abbey company has recently received a badly needed shot in the arm with the final government approval of the plans for the new theater to be erected on the site of the old. The new Abbey will be small, as was its predecessor, with a seating capacity of about six hundred; and there will also be an experimental theater attached—for the production of poetic drama and the trying out of new production methods.

The Abbey, of course, needs something more than a new building. Its directorate, for example, was sadly in need of new blood; and that new blood has been provided with the appointment, in January last, of Gabriel Fallon to succeed the late Lennox Robinson. Fallon is a man of the theater. A former Abbey actor, close friend for many years of Sean O'Casey, drama critic of the Dublin *Evening Press,* he brings a knowledge of the practical side of the theater, a well-developed critical sense, and a deep understanding of the Abbey's needs which were sorely lacking during the past few years.

BUT THERE are other needs even more pressing than a new director. The present Abbey company is, despite rumors and reports to the contrary, a strong, well-trained group of actors and actresses. There may be no Barry Fitzgerald, no F. J. McCormick, no Siobhan McKenna; but the ensemble playing is as good as it has ever been, and there are individuals in the company of genuine sensitivity and talent. Still, and here we come to the heart of the matter, the Abbey is not getting the plays.

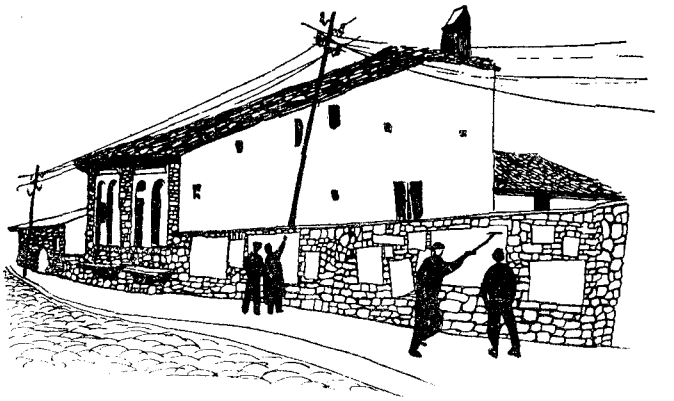
One must accept the sad fact that the great age of the Irish playwright is over. The present crop of dramatists includes men of more than average talent. Walter Macken, John McCann, M. J. Molloy, to name a few, are just that—men of talent—but simply not endowed with the touch of genius necessary for enduring fame in the theater. Only James Plunkett, of those currently writing for the Abbey, promises possession of that extra "something" which bodes well for the future. His play, *The Risen People,* originally written as a radio script for the National Radio, and centered about the career of the labor leader James Larkin, enjoyed a successful run at the Abbey last year; and critics were unanimous in their belief that it was, by all odds, the most effective new play produced there during the past five years.

Certainly, something must be done about the Abbey. It has, for one thing, been the victim of an exceptionally bad "press" even in Irish newspapers and periodicals. Internationally it has fared little better, if we remember the criticisms leveled against it by Eric Bentley some years ago while he served as guest producer there, and the sneers of British reviewers who find the famous Abbey "style," developed in the early days of the dramatic revival by the Brothers Fay, stilted, artificial and part of an outmoded theatrical convention. One might add that the recent American T.V. showing of the Abbey company in George Shiels' "Professor Tim" could not have helped much.

However, contrary to popular belief outside Ireland, the Abbey is not Dublin's only theater. The Gate, founded some thirty years ago as a reaction against Abbey peasant drama, and dedicated to the presentation of the best in "world theater," may have seen its best days; but Lord Longford's Company and the less frequent appearances of the original Gate Company led by Hilton Edwards and Michael MacLiammoir have helped to maintain a high standard there.

Last November, for example, there was an unusually fine production of the dramatized version of Greene's "The Power and the Glory" (the same version seen somewhat later in an off-Broadway theater in New York). Still another Dublin theater, the Olympia, featured in the same month an equally effective dramatization of a novel—in this case Liam O'Flaherty's "The Informer." The adaptation for the stage was made by MacLiammoir, who also played the lead role of Gyppo Nolan and, incidentally, gave the performance of his life. There is some talk of the production being sent to New York, and if it comes here American audiences have a treat in store.

Finally, there is surprisingly good amateur theater in Dublin. One thinks, for example, of a finely sensitive production of Garcia Lorca's "Donna Rosita," done at the Gate by, believe it or not, the dramatic society of a Dublin insurance company. The most ironical news, however, about Irish theater is that Ireland's entry in the international drama festival in Paris was Dublin-born G. B. Shaw's "Saint Joan," with Siobhan McKenna as the Maid and MacLiammoir as the Dauphin;



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and England's entry, again believe it or not, was Dublin-born Brendan Behan's "The Hostages," a play which, for several reasons, Dublin audiences are hardly likely to see.

ONE CANNOT mention the Dublin literary scene without saying something of Behan. Fairly well known on this side of the Atlantic through the New York production of his play "The Quare Fellow," he became even better known through the recent American publication of his hard-boiled autobiography *Borstal Boy*—"banned in Ireland and Australia, but available everywhere else," as his British publishers proudly announced some months ago.

Behan, a product of the North Dublin tenements and a house painter by "profession," is the sort of literary "character" who turns up in Dublin at regular intervals, just as things are getting a bit dull. A swaggering "boyo" with a picturesque and colorful vocabulary, Behan bids fair to join the ranks of the great Dublin eccentrics: Zozimus, Endymion, Toucher Doyle, and "The Bird" Flanagan. Dubliners, never hesitant in attributing base motives to a rising literary figure, generally agree that much of Behan's flamboyance is deliberate and part of a campaign of self-advertisement. Whether this be true or not, he can, like another famous Irishman, write like an angel.

Efforts to link Behan's name with that of O'Casey are, however, far from the mark. Admit the similarity of their backgrounds, their shared understanding of and sympathy for the city of their birth, and their peculiar mastery of the pungent and colorful idiom of the Dublin streets, and the resemblance ends right there; for there is little otherwise that the ascetic O'Casey could possibly have in common with the extroverted Behan.

A cause of genuine concern in Dublin has been the inability of critical and literary journals to survive economic pressures and an indifferent public response. *The Bell* and *New Writing*, two of the best, suspended publication some time ago; and the most recent casualty was the *Dublin Magazine*, edited and published by Seumas O'Sullivan until his death last summer. *Studies*, the scholarly quarterly edited by the Jesuits, is the sole survivor among journals of the first rank and seems able to continue an uninterrupted and healthy growth. There is, however, a promise of better things to come, with the setting up of the Irish Arts Council, headed by the dean of Irish letters, Sean O'Faolain, and bolstered by a grant from the government. It is the hope of Mr. O'Faolain and his associates to be able to subsidize present periodicals and encourage the establishment of new ones, and to work out a scale of payment for articles which will attract contributors who are presently paid very poorly for their published work.

It is difficult to assess just what effect state censorship in Ireland has had upon creative productivity. Certainly there is widespread dissatisfaction with the system among Irish intellectuals. It has had a serious and damaging effect upon one Irish novelist certainly —Benedict Kiely, who has seen a series of novels from his pen banned by the censor, including at least one first-class work, *There was an Ancient House*. The last was banned despite the fact that the book was widely acclaimed in the English Catholic press. The situation is not too serious for men of established reputation, men like O'Faolain and Frank O'Connor (who has left Ireland anyway), since they have publishing ties with British and American firms and ready-made reading publics outside of Ireland.

One amazing sidelight on this whole business of censorship is that there is no theater censorship in Ireland. Arthur Miller's "A View from the Bridge" was, for example, denied a license for production in England (a ban which was later modified considerably); but the play was produced in Dublin last autumn without comment.

IRISH LETTERS are, it seems to this observer, in the balance. The tensions which accompanied the struggle for national independence unquestionably stimulated much of the major writing which appeared in Ireland during the first quarter of this century. The tensions removed, the Irish creative artist has in recent years been working, in a sense, within a vacuum. The tenements which inspired an O'Casey are fast disappearing from the scene; the peasantry which provided the themes for a Synge, a Lady Gregory, and a T. C. Murray have disappeared even more rapidly. The men who were the men of promise ten or twenty years ago have failed to live up to that promise. One thinks, for example, of the poets who broke upon the scene in the thirties and forties and seemed destined to pace a second wave of the revival: Denis Devlin, Robert Farren, Val Iremonger, and (most promising of all) Patrick Kavanagh. Today they have either given up writing entirely, for one reason or another, or write only occasionally and with little indication of their earlier promise.

Until the younger writers find a proper stimulus, little can be expected. This stimulus may come from the newly arisen middle class, perhaps from the still unresolved struggle over the six counties and partition. But found it must be if Irish letters are to survive. It is almost a truism to say that Irishmen write well. Perhaps the real trouble lies just there—writing comes too easily, and there is little of the self-imposed discipline necessary for great achievement. The gift of words is theirs, but until they find something new and worthwhile to write about the future promises little.

And this is all a terrible pity, for the modern world needs Irish writing: its sparkle, its wit, its color, its gaiety—and its sense of sorrow.

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THE BISHOPS' CHALLENGE

THE PERENNIAL birth control controversy has long been a ball of tangled yarn. Now that the issue has been tied in with the 1960 Presidential campaign and the possibility of a Catholic candidate, the confusion is worse than ever.

First of all, these facts must be faced. The Catholic Church when it brands mechanical or chemical means of contraception as immoral *per se* is almost alone these days. Yet this is the universal judgment of the Popes, bishops and theologians of the Church. It is based on the Catholic reading of the Natural Law, which to the faithful is another way of saying the law of God. Let there be no doubt about it: Catholic spokesmen, however lonely, are dead serious when they speak of contraception as a moral evil.

For their part, Catholics must realize that there are millions of God-fearing people who disagree with this judgment, either because they reject Natural Law reasoning *in toto* or because they do not accept the Catholic application of the Law on this point. Some go so far as to hold that family planning and population control are a positive Christian duty.

Catholics may find it depressing, yet there seems to be little question but that in our society the people who approve of birth control are more numerous than those who look upon the practice as immoral. Of course this does not mean Catholics are wrong and the majority is right; but it certainly complicates the question of what attitude the government may properly take.

Like all propagandists, the ardent birth-controllers can be pretty annoying to those who disagree with them. Like all propagandists, the birth-controllers are rarely scrupulous about employing exaggeration and the techniques of mass persuasion. I thought the Catholic Bishops scored a bull's eye on this point when they cited the increasing use of terror tactics in the pro-contraception movement.

But if all this is to be noted, it must be admitted too that the techniques of propaganda have been used by both sides in the war between pro- and anti-birth controllers. The one camp, in its enthusiasm for the cause, has often oversimplified the population problem shamelessly. The other side, in its horror for the proposed solution, has sometimes talked as if there were no problem at all or has blandly offered utopian solutions. As in all propaganda wars, the innocent public has a hard time getting the true picture.

But there is a sense in which the facts barely affect the Catholic argument, for whatever the true scope of the problem, a solution which depends on artificial contraception is unacceptable to the Catholic conscience. It is as unthinkable an answer as cold-blooded genocide would be to the general population. To one who rejects the Catholic moral argument against contraception this may be hard to understand; still, it is the one inescapable fact of the matter.

The Catholic, contrary to a widespread misunderstanding, is not bound to support existing anti-birth control laws and has no obligation to put them on the books where they do not already exist. Not legislating against birth control, however, is quite different from government's actively promoting contraception at home and abroad. In the first case, government takes no sides in the argument. In the latter, it becomes a partisan, using the taxes of all the people for a cause a goodly number of the people deem immoral.

Of course government may do this. It has always done so. For instance, the taxes of American pacifists are impenitently used to support a giant war machine. The Government would be helpless if its actions were limited by the moral scruples of minority groups. By the same token, however, no democratic government can totally discount these scruples. If it must ignore them, as it is sometimes forced to do, it must have the best of reasons for doing so.

So, in the case of birth control, the proper question is—is the security of the United States and the welfare of the American people truly dependent on the control of worldwide population by these particular means? Where it is a question of pacifism, the Government has answered a similar question affirmatively. Moreover, it has backed up this position by an appeal to the general consensus existing among the people. Perhaps the day will come when, on the birth control question, the American Catholic will be in a position analogous to the pacifist's present position.

But in the meantime, by protesting clearly, firmly and unequivocally against government's getting into the planned parenthood business, the Catholic Bishops have spoken with admirable candor. They have declared that American Catholics will not endorse contraceptive programs. They have made it clear that Catholics regard such programs as immoral and that they are politically and psychologically unwise as well. Now, let the argument proceed.

If the decision about such matters belongs to the President, it seems to me there is nothing improper in asking potential candidates where they stand on the matter, so long as all such candidates are polled. Then if the issue, isolated from all others, seems important enough to determine one's choice of candidate, let both Catholics and birth-controllers vote accordingly. It is better that the issue be faced squarely before the election than after.

JOHN COGLEY.

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THE SCREEN

OTHER FACES, OTHER CLIMES

SERGEI EISENSTEIN, the Russian director who proved with movies like "Potemkin," "Ten Days That Shook the World" and "Alexander Nevsky" that he was one of the world's great film makers, finished "Ivan the Terrible, Part II (The Revolt of the Boyars)" in 1946. He had planned a third part, but because of the adverse reception of Part II by Communist officials as well as his own illness (he died in 1948), it was never made. Part II was banned because it portrayed the mature Ivan as a ruler as indecisive as Hamlet. Last year the film was finally released in Russia, and now it can be seen with English subtitles in the United States.

While Part II by no means comes up to the high standards set by Eisenstein's masterpieces, or even up to the first part of the biographical movie about Ivan IV who was crowned in 1547, it is still a film to be reckoned with; and it has many scenes that show the work of a powerful director. However, since Eisenstein both wrote and directed "Ivan," the film as a whole must be considered his; and the whole lacks coherence. It is impressive for its magnificent photography, especially in the close-ups of the many faces and in the sequences in which Ivan (Nikolai Cherkassov) realizes his loneliness and responsbilities, or when Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow (Andrei Abrikosov) contemplates in anger and sorrow the bodies of the boyars slaughtered by Ivan, or when Ivan's aunt, Efrosinia (Serafima Birman), plots to murder Ivan and put her own son on the throne. The failure of this plan provides the story's climax; and for the big banquet scene, in which the wily Ivan persuades Efrosinia's weakling son to don the regal robes and sit on the throne, Director Eisenstein dropped his usual black-and-white photography to experiment with color. The result, though not spectacular, is interesting.

Perhaps this might be said of the whole film. It is a fascinating study, on an elegant operatic scale, of a leader determined to crush sedition and get rid of the plotting landed nobles. It is hard to understand, however, why the Central Committee of the Communist Party objected to this portrait of Ivan. Although he is shown as vacillating between religious fanaticism and terrible tyranny, Ivan does wind up at the end warning all comers that having disposed of interior foes he is ready to tackle foreign enemies.

THE RUSSIAN press was rather kind to "Marty," the first of the American films to be shown in the Soviet Union under the Cultural Exchange Agreement, and I am sorry I cannot be more enthusiastic about their first Exchange film to be shown here. "The Cranes Are Flying" won prizes and audiences abroad —and it is no slouch as a movie—but it is peculiarly old-fashioned, reminiscent of some of our war films and hardly startling for its cinematic invention or for what it has to say.

It tells the story of a young couple who are very much in love and who are separated by World War II when the boy volunteers for the army. The girl's parents are killed in an air raid, and she moves in with his family. She is heartbroken that he never writes; and, strangely enough, neither she nor his family is notified when he is killed at the front. In the meantime, the poor girl is assaulted by the boy's cousin, marries the cousin and eventually hates her weak-willed, selfish, draft-dodging husband. At the finale she learns of the death of her true love, but feels richer for having known him and is confident that the future will work out well for her. The flying cranes are a symbol, a note of hope even in sorrow.

What success Victor Rozov's script has lies chiefly in its simplicity and lack of ostentation. Unfortunately the print being shown here is poorly dubbed in English and consequently the dialogue takes on a stiffness that does not fit the warmth of the acting. Director Mikhail Kalatozov is at his best in the scenes showing the young lovers (nicely played by Tatyana Samoilova and Alexei Batalov) in their glowing regard for each other; this theme is repeated later when the dying boy imagines the war is over and he is hurrying to his wedding. Although its story lacks dramatic punch, "The Cranes Are Flying" is memorable for its picture of middle-class city life.

IN A MORE modern vein is "The Cousins," an import from France, another example of the work of those youthful "new wave" directors who take their cinema very seriously and hope to improve it as an art form. Produced, directed and written by twenty-eight-year-old Claude Chabrol, who excels in every department, "The Cousins" is a brilliant study of decadence. It is like the movies made from the stories by Françoise Sagan—but far more penetrating. Its story is simple enough; a country cousin comes to Paris to stay with his sophisticated city cousin while both boys attend law school. The innocent boy from the backwoods (played to perfection by Gerard Blain, whose shy charm makes him even more convincing) is repelled and fascinated by his slick, man-about-town Parisian cousin (made equally convincing by Jean-Claude Brialy) and his chi-chi apartment and his "beat" friends. The country cousin manages to get in some studying in spite of the highly irregular goings-on and the wild parties. When the country cousin falls in love with a very pretty girl (Juliette Mayniel), the cynical city cousin, knowing she is a tramp, persuades

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her to share his own bed. But the blow that crushes the hard-working country boy comes when he fails in his examinations and the grasshopperish city cousin passes with flying colors.

The film's finale is shocking, but perhaps the only end fitting to this disturbing tale. If the acting throughout were not so good and Claude Chabrol's production anything less than first-rate, "The Cousins" would sink to a cheap thriller. But it stands as a powerful commentary on the self-centered beat and angry young people, the kind of commentary our movies have not yet made. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"AMERICAN BARONIES"

San Diego, Calif.

TO THE EDITORS: In my recent article on the intermountain West ["American Baronies," Nov. 13], I wrote that the Anaconda Copper Co. had sold its newspaper properties to the Spiedel chain. This is in error. The newspapers were acquired by the Lee Group, an entirely different chain.

In checking my notes, I find I had the facts correct; so I must have made the error in typing. At the time, I was preparing a lecture on the political orientation of Western newspapers, and I can only suggest that the remarkable similarity in the editorial policies of the two chains produced a mental juxtaposition on my part.

LAWRENCE T. KING.

EDITOR—ASST. EDITOR

Distinguished publishing company in the New York area is seeking experienced editorial personnel for their Catholic textbook department.

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"SOLDIER, STATESMAN, TARGET"

St. Louis, Mo.

TO THE EDITORS: One reader finds an observation in your epitaph of the late Gen. George Marshall distasteful (without in the least disagreeing with your evaluation of a great man) [Nov. 6].

The allusion to a columnist's gossip, recounting the assertion of "one close to" the General, reporting that Gen. Marshall "night after night" waited hopefully for support from his protégé, Gen. Eisenhower, is hopelessly gratituitous and, I submit, invidious.

The only slurs upon the career of Gen. Marshall (whether they are justified or not, history ultimately will decide) slash at his last years as a public servant when he was engaged with negotiations in Asia—engagements with which Gen. Eisenhower would have no concern.

If the President of the United States has rarely found it necessary to defend the conduct of Gen. Eisenhower, it should not be surprising that, in the midst of a campaign for the presidency, Candidate Eisenhower should not have gratituously taken up cudgels for one whom you call his sponsor.

George Catlett Marshall's claim upon his countrymen's honor can be established without dishonor to any other man. CHARLES ALLEN

AN APPEAL

Bede Griffiths writes on behalf of the work of "a young Indian friend, a Benedictine Oblate who is in the *Sarvodaya* (service) movement of Vinoba Bhave. He is in charge of a group of villages near Madura, helping the undernourished villagers organize their lives on a communal basis and improve their methods of agriculture. The work involves building roads, digging wells, introducing sanitation, improving buildings, organizing cultivation and introducing home and village industries. But he is also in constant touch with the villagers' individual needs. . . . I believe that there are many people who feel they would like to help those in need in India and don't know how to set about it. I think that this is the most practical way it can be done. This is a direct contact with the poor in the villages. When you remember that $8 a month can keep a family, it can be seen that even quite small sums will go a long way. Gifts in money or in kind can be sent to: Brother Stephen, Sarvodaya Ashram, Kanavaipatti, Batlugundu P. O., Madurai St., India." (Airmail: 25¢)

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Programmatic Insight

MARTEREAU. By Nathalie Sarraute. Translated by Maria Jolas. Braziller. $3 75.

By WILLIAM DUNLEA

WHEN HER *Portrait of a Man Unknown* appeared here last year many reviewers were lost for superlatives to do justice to their discovery that Nathalie Sarraute had wrought something new in the novel. A first novel can lay down at most a tentative frame of reference for a writer's talents; with *Martereau* some consideration of the relation of Mme. Sarraute's work to that of her immediate contemporaries falls due.

If an art form, even one so flexible as the novel, is to be renovated, the job is best done "from within." The spoke in the wheel of Mme. Sarraute's publicized revolution, i.e., her contribution to the soul-searching chaos of the French novel today, is the fact that she is not a "native" rebel. Her first novel might well stand scrutiny as an interesting experiment; in her second one looks for something more creative. But one finds it weighted with evidence that she is not seeking to open new vistas, that she is, rather, feeling her way upon alien land.

The analytical existential novel in France has been yielding ground in recent years to what might be called the novel of programmatic insight or, better, the novel of the shock probe. The "insight novelist" is indifferent to accepted story values; he is no less indifferent to grammar and punctuation, but that is part of his presentational aggressiveness—with Mme. Sarraute it consists in dot-dilated sentences—in "expressing" his diagnosis of certain case types. Like the choleric young men across the Channel, he is more interested in syndromes than souls.

He proceeds as though it were the novelist's insight into his characters that makes them interesting; thus his characters conform to pathological specifications that make them automatic recorders of his own perceptions. He thereby becomes, contrary to his professed design, the most "omniscient narrator" in the history of fiction. The same thing happens in the novels of Sartre, who used this phrase as a term of denigration.

By a *truly* noble coincidence the narrator of *Martereau* is endowed with precisely the same psychological preoccupations as his "ghost." He is an emasculated tubercular youth who lives a "muffled, slow-motion existence"; we are told it is the author's aim to "reproduce, as in a slow-motion picture, the still nascent psychological reactions that take place very rapidly on the extreme edge of consciousness, and to follow them to the point where they become words or actions." His is an over-acute perceptivity with a felicitous passion for stripping bare every illusion. "I who am always rousing what would remain dormant, who excite, incite, heed, plead, I the impure." Tempests in a teapot are his specialty.

Toward the wealthy aunt and uncle who have taken him in he feels an "insipid kind of pleasure . . . in remaining there glued to them, slimed all over by them, and that it should last for a long time, forever." And "they feel it, these sly benefactors unbosoming themselves proudly to their young *protégé;* they feel upon them the humid, dog-like gaze, the thirsty leech." His idol is the stalwart Martereau, a friend of the uncle; but when a business deal involves him directly with the family he becomes a prosaic figure and another object of suspicion. After countless scenes have been recast and countless scraps of dialogue transposed, we are ready to agree that nothing is clear-cut in human motivation.

The author has set up her vibroscope in a zone where sensation and impulse are anonymous; but they remain so throughout the narrative because those who experience them do not grow in proportion. Thus one cannot speak advisedly of a "disintegration" of character: disintegration from what? Nor is there anything precedent-shattering in a psychology of disintegration: it has been a feature of the French novel since Choderlos de Laclos. Yet in its unrelieved tenor of studied self-contempt—which it shares with many of its sister "insight novels"—*Martereau* makes a comment on the Freudian deposit that has poisoned as it has deepened the well of human consciousness.

Another Journalistic Exposé

KNIGHTS OF MALTA. By Roger Peyrefitte. Translated by Edward Hyams. Criterion Books. $4.50.

By PHILIP DEASY

READERS with stomachs still unqueasy from all the revelations about television fixes, payola, meat chiseling dealers, and lies, especially lies, will find their dish in *Knights of Malta. Corruptio optimi pessima*—and here, in painstaking, often revolting detail, is revealed the corruption in the best of Vatican circles, and within the Sacred College of Cardinals itself. The time is between Sept. 29, 1949 and April 24, 1955. The events related concern the attempts of Cardinal Canali, in particular, abetted by several of his fellow Cardinals and titled laymen close to the Pope, to seize control of the Order of the Knights of Malta and utilize its wealth in money and property to further their own power and prestige. The style and approach of M. Peyrefitte in treating this delicate subject is a remove or two, but not much more, from that, say, of the late *Confidential* magazine. It is a journalistic exposé by an inside-dopester, and by no means, as the dust-jacket has it, the work of "a man of shrewd, discerning vision

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and incomparable literary wit." M. Peyrefitte is not witty; he is merely flippant—and, not infrequently, sneering and mocking.

Presumably *Knights of Malta* is called a novel because the dialogue is fictitious. Even an unabashed *roman à clef* is disguised somewhat, but here names are named, both of persons and magazines and newspapers, and exact dates are given, all with the conviction and authenticity of one who knows because he has been there. M. Peyrefitte was with the French Diplomatic Corps and given access to Vatican archives. At his journalistic best, as in, for example, the chapter describing the aftermath of the painful discovery that the Order's minister in Paris was a Freemason, M. Peyrefitte is capable of an *opéra bouffe* effect that is passably amusing. At his worst, as in his account of the American Marquis who visited the Knights' Rome headquarters in November, 1954, the result is appalling caricature. M. Peyrefitte is, in fact, more than a bit spiteful in what he has to say about the American Knights (sixty-seven admitted into the Order in the early fifties are referred to "as sixty-seven bastards legitimized after the event"), and about the American Cardinal (named, of course) who acts so unilaterally in appointing Knights and who every year has a banquet for the Knights at New York's most famous hotel, at the conclusion of which he takes the plate around himself.

The bulk of *Knights of Malta* is concerned with the proceedings of a "packed" court to decide on charges made against the Knights to the Sacred Congregation of Religious by a former Secretary for Foreign Affairs to the Order who had been dismissed from office for several bad financial deals. The Court, composed of five Cardinals, three of whom, including Canali, were known to be strongly against the Order, was also to look again at the Order's centuries-old claim to be an international, independent order with sovereign rights. After many months an ambiguous decision, one, that is, open to "interpretation," is rendered. The Order is then allowed to hold an election, not for a Grand Master, but for a Lieutenant, to act as the Order's head. The candidate of the "rapacious" Canali is defeated and the Order continues on with its tenuous autonomy.

At one point in all the dubious proceedings against the Knights, their Grand Magistracy threatens to publish a white paper "containing the entire correspondence between the Grand Magistracy and the Holy See since 1949. Even without comment it would, unfortunately, be the most damning act of accusation ever drawn up by Catholic men against the Roman Church."

Now, M. Peyrefitte, in effect, has provided "that most damning act." To what purpose? Two of the Order's lawyers wonder, too, in a letter to one of the Court's Cardinals, about the effect of "the facts" becoming known "outside." "We do not here allude to that section of public opinion represented by the enemies of Mother Church. . . . We may ignore such people. But we may not ignore others, people worthy of consideration, prelates, priests, religious, as well as jurists and scholars in every country where our faith reigns—who are already giving expression to their sorrow and amazement."

Mr. Edward Hyams' translation is competent enough, though there is an unconscionable number of "albeits," and some dubious things like "desolated" as a verb, "cardinalistic," "deploration," and "novelettish."

By Way of Amor

WARRIOR'S REST. By Christiane Rochefort. David McKay. $3.75.

By VIVIAN MERCIER

I HADN'T expected to like this book. Ever since it won the "Prize of the New Wave" in its native France, the word had been spreading that this was one of the most sex-obsessed novels in a sex-obsessed generation. Now, being no more than human, I confess to having read *Fanny Hill* with pleasure, once, but I am getting very tired of young women who seek to emulate Fanny without the benefit of her professional experience or her eighteenth-century prose style. Literary exhibitionism, like its physical counterpart, seems to be unesthetic as well as unhealthy and immoral. Not having asked to review "Warrior's Rest," I was a little startled to find it among my mail.

However, human curiosity made

America's first and foremost periodical on the liturgy of the Church—

I find that it is not possible for me to give adequate praise to *Worship* in the space alloted. It is sound and scholarly—but at the same time lively and direct. Probably most of its readers are priests, but it is written and edited for all Catholics.

The subject matter and purpose of the magazine do not vary from issue to issue: *Worship* is published to help people understand the Mass and the sacraments. Yet there is tremendous variety in its pages; perhaps the first and possibly the most valuable educational experience one gets from it is the realization of the ties between liturgy and life.

Worship treats of the social order, religious sociology, music, art, and architecture, of the psychology of modern man, the meaning of sacrifice, liturgical reforms, and of the participation of the laity in the prayer-life of the Church.

I said it was for "all Catholics," but there must be a reservation. Though *Worship* is "popular" in the sense of being non-technical, it asks serious work and some background of its readers. Given the work, the background could be derived (over a number of issues) from the magazine itself.

— Robert Hoyt in *The Kansas City–St. Joseph Register*

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me start reading; gradually I realized that this novel is not about sex but about love—neurotic and perverse love, no doubt, yet ultimately achieving *caritas* by way of *amor*.

An heiress, Geneviève Le Theil, blunders into the hotel room of Renaud Sarti just in time to frustrate his attempted suicide. Feeling responsible for this "dead" man whom she has forced back into life, she meets him on his discharge from the hospital, falls in love, and quickly becomes his mistress. Soon he is permanently established in her Paris apartment, playing the role of caliph to her slave-girl devotion. At first one thinks this book will be another *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, dealing with the "fulfillment" of yet one more frigid woman—the woods, it appears, are full of them.

But Renaud, we find, for all his prowess in the boudoir, is himself unfulfilled—unable to love, unable to believe in Geneviève's love, unable to bear reality until it has been diluted with plenty of alcohol. Sadistically he tests the blind loyalty of Geneviève by making ever more outrageous demands on her body and spirit. Her physical health breaks down and her friends rush her off to a sanitarium without permitting Renaud to know where she is.

Unable to do without her, he at length manages to find her, but once they are together again he torments her by his infidelity. He is drinking more and more heavily. Only when she becomes pregnant, and he realizes that the unborn child is more important to her than he, does he fully admit his need for her love. Suddenly the novel has shifted levels from potential tragedy to Shavian comedy, with the self-acclaimed superman trapped by woman's biological purpose. However, Renaud is still an alcoholic, drinking to hide from himself the truth that he is not, after all, a superman. A *deus ex machina* is needed, and here he comes, the only possible one in a godless world—a doctor. The book ends with Renaud entering a sanitarium for a "cure" while Geneviève wonders whether a reconstructed Renaud is what she really wants.

Does this hasty summary make the book sound like trash? Probably, and yet it isn't quite that. Several of the scenes, too, though delicately worded, run perilously close to the orgiastic wish-fulfillment fantasies of commercial pornography. The hero's amorousness, especially as he is an alcoholic, belongs to fantasy rather than realism. It is Geneviève's devotion, however unworthy of it Renaud may be, that gives the book its value. Her turmoil, not the factitious "rest" of the title and ending, remains with us after we finish reading. Renaud's suicide, successful this time, would have made a far better conclusion than the rather clumsy attempt to reverse the roles of Orpheus and Eurydice.

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